

# PROPAGANDA



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A high-contrast, black and white close-up photograph of Diamanda Galas. She has dark hair and is wearing heavy makeup, including dark eyeshadow and red lips. Her eyes are closed or heavily shadowed. She is wearing a dark, draped garment that covers her neck and shoulders.

Diamanda Galas  
the plague mass



Siouxsie · Nirvana · Jesus & Mary Chain

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The fairest of them all, Siouxsie on page 4.

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# The Haunting of Siouxsie

Words by Stephanie Young

Images by Donna Francesca



## THE GREATEST POWER LIES IN THE UNEXPLAINED.

These are the words Siouxsie & The Banshees used to describe the motivation behind their latest album, **SUPERSTITION**, decidedly their most mystical offering since the darkly layered **NOCTURNE** of 1985. But before you jump to the conclusion that the Banshees are regressing to some earlier stage, keep in mind that **SUPERSTITION** is as different from any of their past material as **PEEPSHOW** (their previous LP) was back in '88. **PEEPSHOW**, with its carnival/cabaret atmosphere, alien-

ated many long-time fans of Siouxsie Sioux's punk queen/gothic goddess persona of the late '70s and early '80s. **SUPERSTITION**, while much more somber and introspective, is a lot like **PEEPSHOW** in that it catapults the band in a completely new direction. It doesn't pander to outdated expectations. While holding onto their trademark otherworldliness, the Banshees discard old "death-rock" clichés and enter the realm of the unexplainable with a more modern and sophisticated approach. Siouxsie credits the band's longevity to its ability to shed old skins and offer something completely fresh.

"I think our greatest asset is our ability to reinvent ourselves," says Siouxsie. "We periodically overhaul everything — our sound, our themes, our look. It's not so much a calculated



Siouxsie Sioux  
Photo by Mark Seliger

thing as it is just plain boredom with what's old. As White back, I knew I had to change how I looked when I began seeing music and fashion magazines presenting "the Siouxie Look." My god, there were all these clones of me. I'd never want to become a self-parody, so I keep changing. Anyway, it's refreshing to always keep progressing."

Though the band revises its approach periodically, they will never completely discard their fundamentally image as a conduit for a stream of spiritual consciousness. Siouxie and the boys have too much of a personal interest in the extra-natural side of reality. **SUPERSTITION** reaffirms that.

"Ever since I was a child," explains Siouxie, "I've had a tremendous fascination with how certain superstitions began, and why they began. I think it had something to do with my interest in nursery rhymes, particularly the frightening ones, the kind of stuff no writer today would dream of creating for children. Many of them have appeared in my lyrics. [Such as] 'Jack-who-jumped-over-the-candlestick' in 'Burn Up,' [such] This interest extends to the unexplainable events in real life as well. I wanted to reinforce for the recording of **PEEPSHOW** at an old country estate in Sussex that was said to be haunted. It was necessary for the vibe we wanted. It was an odd, rambling place, where giant-sized cats chased rats and rabbits, and the grounds looked like an alien landscape. I've always been drawn to those kind of places."

The new single off **SUPERSTITION**, "Kiss Them For Me," draws from this peculiar interest and documents the tragic life of '50s starlet Jayne Mansfield — her life, her ambitious pursuit of stardom, and the odd circumstances surrounding her death in 1967. For Siouxie, the story of Miss Mansfield represents not only a real-life example of those tragic nursery rhymes, but also incorporates the aforementioned fascination with places of mystery and legend.

"Her mansion, the Pink Palace, is supposedly haunted,"

claims Siouxie. "Did you know that night after Mama Cass bought the place in 1974, she choked to death. Then Ringo Starr bought it and moved out when weird things started happening — like strange perfume odors and a pink ooze dripping from the ceilings. Engelbert Humperdinck purchased the place soon after and finally had it exorcised by two priests. I think he's still living there. Anyways, her whole story is amazing, including the way her death by decapitation in a car crash was predicted by Aleton LaVey [Church Of Satan]. Every life, every event has a dark, unexplainable side to it. There's always a story behind everything that happens. It's just more grisly for the lyric material. Siouxie's indulgence in these topics also has its own dark side. A mystique has been built up around her like some confounding dungeon."

"Soon after **JULU** came out in '81," she recalls, "we started receiving a lot of disturbing mail. Most of it was harmless horoscope charts, trinkets and letters from people claiming to have either psychic abilities or mystical powers. Some of it, however, was bordering on threatening. The press didn't help matters any by dubbing me 'Satanic Siouxie.' I guess it all goes with the territory."

What do you expect when you name an album after a Voodoo talisman. It remains to be seen what **SUPERSTITION** will provoke, especially with tracks like "Fear (of the Unknown)" and "Drifter," and especially with all the oracles out there. Siouxie seems to acknowledge that fact with her numerous songs based on the subject of madness and compulsion.



Siouxsie and her Banshees look for answers in the reflecting pool. What they came away with were chilling songs like "Shadowtime" and "The Ghost In You."

# *sleeping beauty*



"It's a common theme of mine because I believe there's a certain degree of madness lurking inside everyone. Every silver cloud has a dark lining. But for most of us, there's something that prevents us from acting on every insane impulse — maybe it's just our socialization."

It appears that the Banshees have finally achieved some stability as far as their line-up is concerned. The three core members, Siouxsie, Steve Severin (bass) and Budgie (drums and husband to Siouxsie), have been together for years. They added keyboardist Martin McCannick and guitarist Jon Kiven for the *PEEP-SHOW* album. Joe playing guitar on both *PEEP-SHOW* and *SUPERSTITION* marks the first time in years that a single guitarist has appeared on successive albums. Prior to his stardom, Joe went through guitarists like a hooker through johns. Siouxsie has an interesting analogy to the axeman dilemma.

"For a long time," she says, "our guitarist position was like our very own 'Portrait of Dorian Gray.' That position

bore all the trials and tribulations of the band. Our long string of guitarists bore all the scars, and we came out unscathed."

The band's presence today, and the incredible success of *SUPERSTITION*, is testimony to that. Their recent North American tour proved to be a successful encore to their popular Loftapalooza participation. In that tour, only Jane's Addiction garnered more attention.

"*SUPERSTITION* is like a rebirth for us," says Siouxsie. "We took a long rest and now we've emerged from hibernation. We've taken the elements we've always used in the past and mixed them with completely new ideas. It has captured a whole new crop of fans for us. That's what all good music, good writing and good art should do — expand your boundaries without compromising your intentions. If you use all the good creative ideas you always have, and turn them on end, you'd be surprised how prolific your creativity can be."

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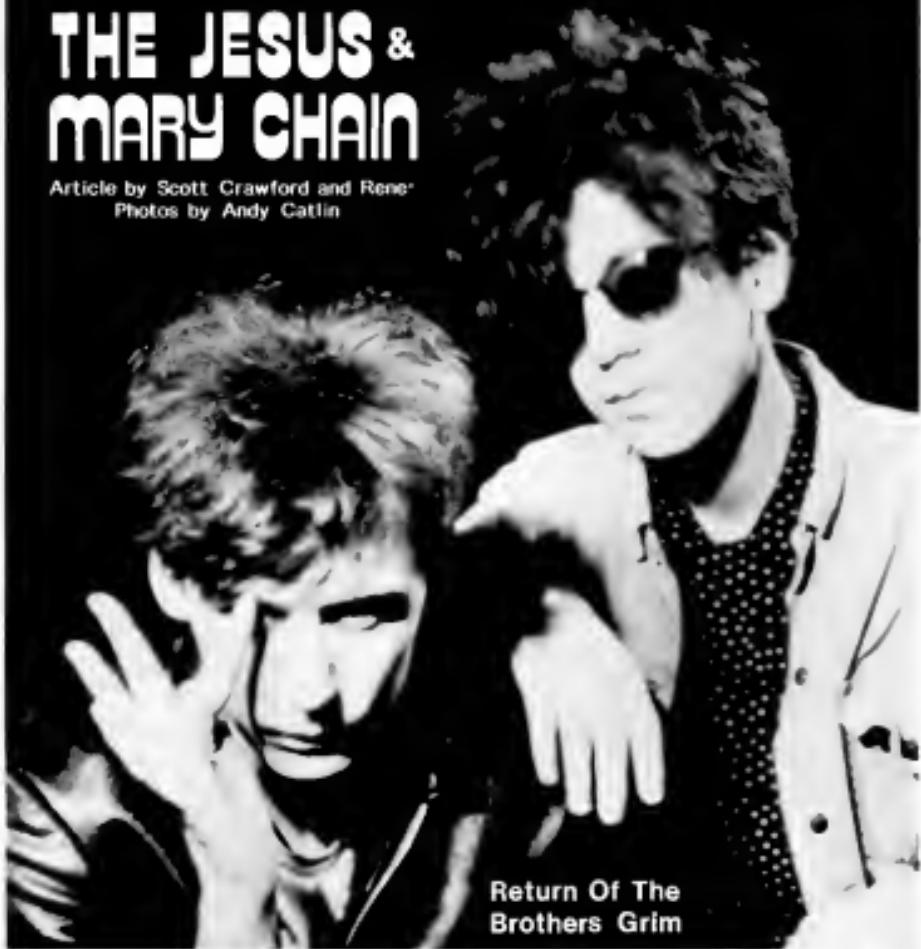
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DOWN, DOC MARTENS WERE THERE!

# THE JESUS & MARY CHAIN

Article by Scott Crawford and Rene' Catlin  
Photos by Andy Catlin



## Return Of The Brothers Grim

On Friday the 13th of July 1990, The Jesus & Mary Chain departed our shores and subsequently dropped from sight. They played their final show of that America tour at the Hollywood Palladium and then disappeared across the big pond into the labyrinth of London's winding Soho streets. It was there that we caught up with the perennially elusive brothers grim — William and Jim Reid — the co-conspirators in the Mary Chain scheme. Finding their self-owned recording studio was difficult enough, but the prospect of interviewing the terrible twosome (as far as journalists are concerned) made the whole escapade even more nerve-racking.

Once we got cozy in the charming Victorian flat, however, my fears were allayed when Jim assured me that the band's bad boy image was just marketing hype that served the Chain well in the early days. It kept the riff-raff at bay.

"It just wasn't in our nature to cheerfully give it our all — the good college try — in live performances and in interviews," he explains. "I would feel pretty stupid smiling and waving to the crowd while on stage — or doing leg kicks and jumping around. I guess because we didn't constantly walk around with dumb grins on our faces, people assumed we were arrogant. I think it has more to do with just being somewhat shy and introverted. Being the perky rock star on stage or in interviews feels very unnatural, very uncomfortable. It doesn't mean we dislike performing or talking to the press."

Thanks guys, I feel much more at ease now. Looking around the studio, it becomes quite apparent why the Reid brothers have holed themselves up here so long. The surroundings are comfortable, with all the amenities and creature-comforts.

Since that last American tour for the **AUTOMATIC** LP, however, a lot has happened in the music industry. In the

States, we've seen the back-to-basics resurgence led by Nirvana, and in Britain, bands like the Stone Roses and Happy Mondays have turned the charts on their ears. The question then arises as to how relevant The Jesus & Mary Chain are today. Have they been passed by? Would the innovative genius that propelled them through the '80s still muster enough oomph to power them through the '90s? If the colossal success of their latest single, "Reverence," is any indication, then the answer has to be a resounding YES. The tone is classical J&MC with an updated arrangement. Even the normally skeptical British press lauded the record as the most important release thus far of the '90s. Now that the band has just finished recording their forth album, to be titled HONEY'S DEAD, Jim and William seem perfectly positioned to reclaim their lofty perch in the rock music hierarchy.

"As for your question, 'How relevant are we now,' I think we're as relevant today as we were back when we first started in '85 with PSYCHOCANDY," says William in his quaint Scottish accent. "Maybe more so, because music back then was shit. The shallow garbage Duran Duran and Culture Club put out dominated the charts. The audiences are much more sophisticated now. Look at the successes of the Stone Roses, KLF, Happy Mondays, etc. It's not so much that we changed our music to make us relevant as it is how much the audiences' tastes have changed."

It's been three years since AUTOMATIC was released. Why would the Mary Chain even risk becoming irrelevant and forgotten by waiting so long to come out with something new?

"We're not gonna put out an album for the sake of just putting out an album," says William. "A lot of bands do that just to satisfy the record companies and producers, and then they come out with crap. The new record was completed only when we felt we had enough 'proper' material to fill it up. In the long run, that's the only way to satisfy both us and our fans. It's better to come out with one quality album than three crappy ones. Anyway, we did come out with the ROLLERCOASTER EP in the interim."

Not only does The Jesus & Mary Chain have a new LP to spearhead their re-entry into the music biz fray, but they also have a new record label, a new lineup to back the Reid boys, and a new extensive tour schedule. Def American's Rick Rubin was determined to sign the J&MC away from Warner Brothers. He has set up a new "alternative division" at Def American to be headed by agent extraordinaire Marc Geiger, whose been responsible in the past for signing such alternative giants as Jane's Addiction, the Pixies, New Order, Love & Rockets, Siouxsie & the Banshees, Deee-Lite, you name it. The sinister sensibilities of Rick Rubin should match nicely with the doomy domain of the evil Reid boys. "Reverence" alone has enough gloom in it for a whole LP. The subject matter actually deals with the heroic glory of a quick, dramatic death.

"That's the way I'd like to go out," claims Jim gleefully. "I mean, I wouldn't want to just die slowly of old age or of, God forbid, AIDS. That's the kind of death I'm really afraid of. In 'Reverence' we explore how society reveres glamourous and dramatic deaths. I mean, even the symbol of Christianity is some guy brutally nailed to a piece of wood. Think objectively how gruesome that is. Part of the reverence our culture has for Christ is for the way he died. Do you think we'd be worshipping him if he just screwed some whore, got syphilis and wasted away? Look at Kennedy. Do you really think there'd be this fascination and reverence for him if he just retired from office, hit the lecture circuit and croaked from old age? Let's face it, part of what made their lives great were their deaths. That's why I say, if I gotta go, let it be in some blaze of glory... when I'm 86, of course. I don't wanna tempt any of the crazies out there. I'm already paranoid enough when I'm on stage."

This sentiment is spelled out quite clearly in "Reverence." "I wanna die just like Jesus Christ. I wanna die like JFK. I wanna die on a sunny day. I wanna die in the M.S.A." Lyrics like those aren't exactly going to endear a song to the British music-TV programs like Top Of The Pops or The Chart Show. This, however, is not a consideration to the Reid boys when they create a song.

"We haven't been on those shows for years anyway," says

## Jim Reid gives the sign



William. "I don't think we've had a video on The Chart Show since '87 with 'Darklands' [from the DARKLANDS LP]. But we've never really depended on media attention for our success. We've always relied on our fans being informed. That's the way I prefer it. It allows you to maintain some shred of dignity. HONEY'S DEAD is exactly where we want to be at the point in time. It combines the best elements of our past material with our new influences. We're not about to let P.R. and business considerations interfere with that."

"That's what we liked about Warner Bros. and now Def American," adds Jim. "They never asked us to play those games. All they expect from us is to let our consciences be our guides. With that kind of freedom, we expect to really enjoy our upcoming tour of the States."

You can be sure that there are a multitude of Mary Chain fans in the U.S. eagerly anticipating this tour as well. It is set to begin in late May and continue into early summer. The band has just completed a very successful Lollapalooza-style tour of England, where they shared the bill with such hot upstarts as My Bloody Valentine, Dinosaur Jr., and Blur. They performed some of their new material off HONEY'S DEAD, like "Sundown" and "Good For My Soul." The crowd responded enthusiastically,

"When we left the states two years ago," announces Jim, "I said 'we shall return'." And return they shall. Not everyone named Jesus makes their final appearance on Friday the 13th. ■■■

# holy spear holy blood



TEXT AND PHOTOS BY FRED H. BERGER

On Friday the 5th of April 33 A.D. the history of the world was forever changed; it was the day that Christ died. The location of this cataclysmic turning point was Golgotha, "the place of the skull," that wretched hilltop outside Jerusalem reserved for the execution of criminals. For it was here that Jesus of Nazareth was crucified for defying the Jewish priesthood and for proclaiming himself the Son of God. According to the Old Testament Book of Zechariah, chapter 12:verse 10, the Messiah would be the one "whom they have pierced," and so he was with a spear thrust into his side by the Ro-

man centurion Gaius Cassius, who would thereafter be known as Longinus the Spear-man. And in Psalms 34:20 it is written, "And not a bone of him shall be broken," and so it came to pass, for the centurion's weapon had penetrated the heart of Christ thereby preventing mutilation at the hands of the Jewish temple guard. These guardsmen were under orders from the Sanhedrin to thwart the prophecy of Psalms 34:20 so that the scripture would go unfulfilled and the people would not believe in the divinity of the one called Jesus. Under the pretense of hastening death prior to sunset in observance of the Sabbath, even though Jesus was already dead and it

"Then one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water."

Saint John, 19:34

was still only mid-afternoon, the temple guard prepared to smash his legs with wooden mallets.

Horrified by this impending act of barbarism and rent by compassion, the centurion charged the Cross on horseback and plunged a spear into the right side of Christ between the fourth and fifth rib. The sacred heart had been pierced, and it was at this moment that Gaius Cassius was converted to Christianity, "saying, Truly this was the Son of God" - Matthew 27:54. For an officer in the Roman army, and a pagan, this was indeed very strange behavior. But by protecting the body of Jesus Christ two of the prophecies pertaining to the Messiah had been fulfilled - that he would be pierced and that none of his bones would be broken. Longinus, in a brilliant flash of illumination, had accomplished a two-fold mission by means of an act which was both martial and merciful. He was precisely the right man at the appointed time and place, and with a decisive thrust of the lance he shattered the strangle hold of Hell and Death on the entire human race.

As the Holy Blood spilled onto the ground the Earth was miraculously liberated from the dominion of the indwelling luciferic hierarchies. And as the centurion watched the Jewish soldiers approach the crucifix with their mallets, and as he reined his horse, tightly clutching the Spear, the destiny of the world rested solely in his hands. The weapon which he then raised with a profound sense of humility and compassion had become the instrument which would thwart the anti-Christ conspiracy of the High Priests of Jerusalem and the powers of darkness which threatened to corrupt all creation. It was under such dire cosmic circumstances of a moribund Earth in the grip of demonic principalities that the Spear, awash in the miraculous blood of Christ, became the focal point of preternatural forces capable of profoundly altering the course of human events.

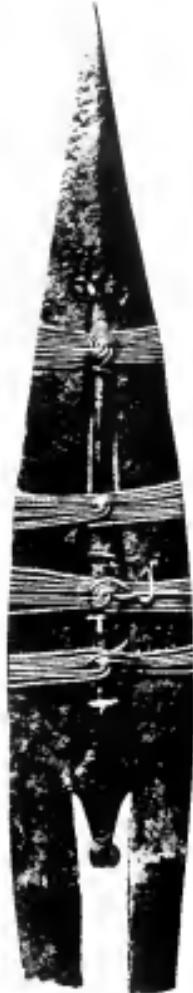
It was from within this historical and spiritual context that the legend of the Spear of Destiny emerged. The old legend proclaims; "Whosoever possesses this Holy Lance and understands the power it serves, holds in his hands the destiny of the world for good or evil." Throughout the ages this amazing promise has been the obsession of Europe's most ambitious men, for it was a promise of world-ruling destiny made good in the course of that mighty ritual on Golgotha in the dust and despair of ancient Palestine.

The Crucifixion is so rich in multiple lay-

ers of ritualistic symbolism that even the Spear's point of entry into Christ's body is of paramount importance. In determining whether someone was actually dead, it was common Roman practice to puncture the heart by driving a spear between the fourth and fifth ribs. If blood gushed out, the hapless individual was still alive; if this did not happen - his worries were over. In the case of Jesus a bloody outflow did ensue even though he was already dead, as was plain to see by the cessation of respiration. This unlikely flow of blood from a lifeless corpse was taken to mean that the sacred heart of the Savior had triumphed over death, and would beat forever in the hearts of true believers. According to the Book of Genesis, Eve was created from Adam's fifth rib, a phenomenon which resulted in the advent of human sexuality. And as it happens in the development of the human embryo, the sex organs begin to take their distinctive form after the formation of the fourth rib and before the formation of the fifth rib. It can therefore be concluded that Christ's transcendence of sexuality was symbolized as a result of the martial discretion of the Spearman Longinus.

#### THE POWER OF THE HOLY LANCE

The Middle Ages were called the Age of Faith, and with very good reason. Worship of



The Spear of the Roman centurion Longinus which pierced the side of Christ in 33A.D. A nail from the Cross was later inserted into the blade and fastened with copper wire.



"And the fire which was kindled by his deeds infected the blood of the whole human race."

- Chronicle of the Sorcerer Landulf II of Capua

The incubus, the black Cupid, or demon lover invoked by the sorcerer.

Christ's tortured body had reached a climax of intensity, its pain and physical beauty inspired artists and poets for over a thousand years following the collapse of Rome in the 5th century A.D. In transports of love and pity, brave and pious men would prostrate themselves before their masochistic icon. In the absence of the consecrated bread of the Eucharist, knights would eat grass, earth, or leaves to express their desire to receive the Body of Christ. And prior to battle, the Christian soldier would kiss the hilt of his sword, symbolic of the Holy Cross. It was a time when men such as these accepted the legend of the Lance without hesitation, and knew how to unleash its oh so great and terrible powers.

This same devotional obsession and capacity for simple belief had descended upon the pagan centurion at the Crucifixion. Thereafter he converted many of his relatives to Christianity, and the Holy Lance became a prized family heirloom. Its importance was reaffirmed in 286 A.D. at which time it belonged to the Roman general Mauritius,

descendant of Longinus, and a Christian who had converted all 6,000 men of the Theban Legion under his command to Christianity. On pain of death the Roman Emperor Maximian ordered them to destroy the Lance, denounce their faith, and embrace the pagan gods of Rome, but all refused and passively submitted to decapitation. The martyrdom of the Theban Legion and their leader, later canonized as St. Maurice, was one of the most spectacular demonstrations of religious conviction ever recorded. Although the Emperor had demanded the destruction of the Spear of Longinus, he claimed it as his own in the belief that it was truly a spear of the gods which had caused so many brave legionnaires to choose death without protest or resistance.

Maximian later presented the Spear to Constantine the Great who had married his daughter. With his elevation to emperor, Constantine announced he was guided by Providence as he held the Spear of Destiny at the epoch-making battle on the Milvian Bridge outside Rome. It was a victory which gave him control of the Roman Empire and made

it possible for him to declare Christianity its official religion upon his conversion in 313 A.D. The transfer of the Lance from Roman to Germanic rulers came when the savage Alaric the Bold and his Visigoth barbarians sacked Rome in the year 410 A.D., and shortly thereafter, upon his acquisition of the sacred Spear, was converted to the Christian faith. In 451 A.D. when Attila the Hun invaded Gaul, he was opposed by the mighty Visigoth Theodoric who rallied his forces around the Spear and forced the Asiatic hordes into headlong retreat.

In the 8th century the Spear of Destiny continued to be the very pivot of the historic process. It was in the possession of the Frankish general Karl "the Hammer" Martel when Western Europe was once again rescued from foreign invasion, this time by the armies of Islam. The Saracens had conquered Spain and were surging into Gaul when the Hammer routed them at Poitiers in 732 in a triumph which earned him the title of "Savior of Christendom." The holy talisman of power then passed into the hands of Charlemagne, who in the 9th century used it as a force of unification in consolidating nearly all the Christian lands in the West, and in the Christianization of the Slavic territories.

Altogether 45 Germanic emperors had laid claim to the Spear of Destiny between the coronation of Charlemagne in the year 800 and the fall of his Holy Roman Empire exactly 1000 years later. They had ruled to varying degrees of piety and ruthless expansionism - launching crusades, dictating to Popes, and wielding powers not known since the days of Imperial Rome; hence their claim to the title of Holy Roman Emperor. And time and again these mighty rulers used the power of the Spear to defend Christian lands against the infidel, from Moslems to Mongols, and to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the Old World.

#### BLACK MAGIC AND A WORLD IN RUINS

But the story of the Holy Lance is not all one of pious intentions and divine intervention, for its power can be subverted to steer righteous men from their Christ-inspired path into paths of ruin and perdition. Subversion on a cosmic scale was in fact achieved in the 9th century by the dreaded sorcerer Landulf II of Capua, who from his castle eyrie in the mountains of Arab-occupied Sicily plotted the down-

The body of Christ as an object of worship, its nakedness crying out for love and pity. From "The Baptism of Christ" by Francesco Francia, early 15th century.



fall of all Christendom by means of the most monstrous sexual black magic. One chronicler of the period referred to the Landulf as "the mock of the world," while another commented, "And the fire which was kindled by his deeds infected the blood of the whole human race." It is also written that the day before he was born his mother dreamed she would give birth to a burning torch that would "rage like hellfire in the breast of the righteous." This is exactly what happened, for it was against the three grandsons of the Emperor Charlemagne that he conducted perverse rites of sadistic savagery.

From within the walls of the foreboding Kalot Enbolot citadel atop Monte Castello in southwest Sicily, the Landulf invoked incubus demons to rape young virgins, who were then shot with arrows through the erogenous zones with the aim of planting vile sexual fantasies in the minds of the secular rulers of Europe. Such carnal obsessions would thus lead to the moral corruption and spiritual blindness of these anointed "Defenders of the Faith" and "Servants of Christ," with the collapse of the Holy Roman Empire following as its inevita-

ble consequence. Such a satanic conspiracy was very much in the interest of Landulf's Saracen allies, who protected him from his enemies and granted him a far-flung fief from which to launch his magical assaults against the Christian foe.

Although baptized into the Catholic faith, Landulf had been excommunicated for the rape of an Italian noblewoman, a crime for which he was also subjected to the ghastly justice of castration. Aflame with a burning fury and hell-bent to bring vengeance upon all creation, he traveled to Egypt to study Arabian star magic, with its emphasis on sexual sadism and human sacrifice. Such ritualistic practices were designed to call forth various Spirits of Darkness corresponding to the astrological signs. This was bad medicine indeed, especially in the hands of one as violently hostile against God and man as the Landulf of Capua. He prostrated himself before the Spirit of Anti-Christ in a solemn vow to render Christ's sacrifice utterly worthless by severing those who possessed the Holy Lance from divine guidance.

It was along the lines of march of the

"Whosoever possesses this Holy Lance and understands the power it serves, holds in his hands the destiny of the world for good or evil."

- the legend of the Spear of Longinus



A black and white photograph showing a man from behind, wearing only a loincloth. He is tied to a large, dark wooden cross. His arms are raised, and his body is angled forward. He appears to be in a state of exhaustion or death.

"Sweet Jesus, thy body is like a  
book written all with red ink;  
so is thy body all written with  
red wounds."

- the cult of the Body of Christ



Mohammedan invader through Spain and southern Italy that word of Landulf's diabolical sorceries spread to the rest of Europe, and suddenly, as if under some evil spell, the great Holy Roman Empire disintegrated in 840 A.D. - just 40 years after Charlemagne created it out of the chaos of the Dark Ages. The Christian world was torn apart from within by warring factions in a merciless battle for supremacy, and what had been an illuminated theocracy was reduced to a "pornocracy" as debauchery and corruption plagued the ruling circles of church and state. With the Carolingian dynasty of Charlemagne blinded to the exalted spirit vision of the Spear of Longinus, the Empire suffered crushing blows from Saracens in the south, Magyars in the east, and Vikings in the north. As the wizard of Capua and his circle of black adepts disemboweled sacrificial victims beneath zodiacal signs and the symbol of the swastika (Landulf's heraldic emblem), the eclipse of Western Civilization was totalized, and there ensued a hellish night of fear and mayhem which would last a hundred years.

Eventually the Empire of the Holy Romans would be re-united and its enemies defeated in the 10th century by Heinrich I after swearing himself to the Spirit of the Lance, but the damage of Landulf's astrological demonism had been done, and it was irreversible. With the devastating, though temporary, break-up of the Christian West, the seeds of French and German nationalism were sown, demon seeds which would germinate into two separate nation states whose mutual hatred would lead directly to the cataclysmic First and Second World Wars. And the black magick of Capua would be there, 1,100 years after his 9th century atrocities, at the crucial moment when, in the person of Adolf Hitler, he would claim the Holy Lance as his own and once again engulf the world in flaming destruction.

#### TO BE CONTINUED

In Issue No. 19 of Propaganda, "Holy Spear, Holy Blood" will resume with a further discourse on the old legend, and its effect on men such as Richard Wagner, Aleister Crowley, and Adolf Hitler.



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# DIAMANDA

# REQUIEM FOR THE DEAD

Paul  
Hart



Diamanda Galas enters her "temple of compassion," St. John the Divine.



nd now was acknowledged the presence of the Red Death. He had come like a thief in the night. And one by one dropped the revellers in the blood-bedewed halls of their revel, and died each in the despairing posture of his fall. And the tide of the ebony clock went out with that of the last of the gay. And the flames of the tripods captivated. And Darkness and Decay and the Red Death held illimitable dominion over all.

— Edgar Allan Poe

#### "The Masque Of The Red Death"

It was these words that had a profound effect on a young girl. For her, they galvanized a long-held fascination with the possibility of a mysterious pestilence descending upon the land — a pestilence both devastating and disguised — a thief in the night. So profound was this effect, that when the plague finally did arrive for real, she decided to dedicate her creative life's work to the subject. It was no mere coincidence that this life's work would be entitled **MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH**. For Diamanda Galas, her disquieting intensity and horrific fascination as a child with the possibility of a soon-to-befallen plague can be interpreted as nothing less than a prophetic premonition, considering the sudden appearance and subsequent ravages of the AIDS virus.

"When it first became evident how extensively the virus had spread," recalls Diamanda, "I often wondered why I had

thought so much about such a thing when I was younger. I guess it can only be explained as some sort of psychic revelation, especially since the disease went on to affect my personal life so profoundly." Not only has AIDS claimed the lives of many of her friends, but it stripped her of the one person she cherished more than any other — her brother Philip-Dimini Galas, a noted playwright who succumbed to the thief-in-the-night back in '86.

"My brother and I used to read a lot of Poe, Nietzsche, Antonin Artaud and Gerard Nerval when we were young," recalls Diamanda. "So naturally, this was the material that was going to influence me the most. My first major inspiration had to be Poe's **MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH**, along with much of his other work. It was one of those moments where you read something and you realize what you want to do for the rest of your life. Of course, little did I know at that time just how relevant it would become."

It would be a gross oversimplification and complete injustice to view Diamanda's Herculean effort, **MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH**, as simply the recorded regeneration of the Poe classic. The **MASQUE** is a trilogy consisting of three separate CDs — **THE DIVINE PUNISHMENT**, **SAIN'T OF THE FIT** and **YOU MUST BE CERTAIN OF THE DEVIL** — each taking a different perspective of the AIDS crisis. All are part of an overall **PLAGE MASS** which Diamanda is constructing to document the epidemic — much the way Remond did with the Black Death in his **LA PESTE NOIRE**.

Recently, Diamanda added another installment to the **PLAGE MASS** called **THERE ARE NO MORE TICKETS TO THE FUNERAL**. On Oct. 12th and 13th of 1990, Diamanda

performed the ultimate PLAGUE MASS at St. John the Divine, a huge Episcopal cathedral in upper Manhattan. "It was a high mass for the outcasts," she reveals, "in a church of true compassion." The event was recorded in all its high drama and has been released on Mute Records. Like the previous recordings, Diamanda calls upon her vast musical abilities, as well as her keen intellect. She's a classically trained pianist and has a vocal range that would make many operatic virtuosos green with envy.

The **MASQUE** trilogy draws from many sources and influences and relates a multitude of convictions. "Putting it very briefly," says Diamanda, "the first record [**THE DIVINE PUNISHMENT**] is a geography of the plague mentality. It's the damning voices of the accusers who condemn the victims of the disease as 'unclean.' For this segment, Diamanda recites LEVITICUS from the Old Testament — a text that passes judgement without compassion on those afflicted. This God of the Old Testament offered no redemption or salvation. Pestilence was Divine Punishment — something many of the evangelicals of today are espousing."

"The God of these homophobic accusers is a treacherous, evil God," sneers Diamanda. "In that sense, I must side with those who rebel against that God. If that puts me on the side of Satan, then so be it. I take the view of Milton in **PARADISE LOST**: 'Better to rule in Hell than to serve in Heaven.' I've been accused of being a witch in every country I've performed in anyway, so what do I have to lose. Witches were nothing more than people who refused to follow lock-step with the religious powers that be. They were executed for showing independent thinking. I'd be proud to be included in their ranks."

Diamanda's first LP, **LITANIES OF SATAN**, probably also contributed to this misperception of her as a Satanist. In actuality, the title is based on Charles Baudelaire's **LES LITANIES DE SATAN** — a piece dedicated to those isolated

and alienated by governmental oppression. Even within **DIVINE PUNISHMENT** itself, Diamanda turns the tables on the old, vengeful God and recites from Psalms and Lamentations to the emerging God of compassion. "Deliver me from mine enemies, o my God. The mighty are gathered against me."

"It points out that rebelling against the God of the accusers doesn't necessarily mean you have to be a Satanist," states Diamanda. "Christ rebelled against the old order as well." And in her second chapter of the **MASQUE** trilogy — **SAINT OF THE PIT** — she speaks for those who, like Christ, have been crucified for their beliefs. It is the voice of those afflicted with this slow, agonizing death. Along with her own beat, she sets the words of such 19th century French symbolist poets as Baudelaire, Corbiere and Nerval to the musical instance of Gregorian chants.

"My brother gave me his favorite book of French poetry while on his death bed," recounts Diamanda. "It included works by Gerard Nerval and Tristan Corbiere. What better way than to use these poems to honor him and those like him who've been martyred." Diamanda sees these victims of the AIDS plague as modern-day saints who've been abandoned by a compassionless society.

In the third part of the **MASQUE** trilogy, **YOU MUST BE CERTAIN OF THE DEVIL**, Diamanda abruptly ends her soliloquies mourning with a call to arms — a call to the damned to defend themselves. "Direct action is essential," claims Diamanda. "It's kill or be killed. I know it's not 'politically correct' to advocate the use of guns, but we're talking about survival." Diamanda brandishes a .38 special on the cover of the **YOU MUST BE CERTAIN OF THE DEVIL** LP. Now the Devil has become the enemy — those pious Christian fundamentalists and homophobic government officials who have declared war on the gay community with their policies concerning AIDS issues. For this segment, Diamanda calls upon her Greek heritage and Maniot-Spartan woman tradition, where mourn-



"To the cowards and voyeurs: There are no more tickets to the funeral."

ing becomes dirge-singing and an oath of vengeance.

"In Greece," explains Diamandi, "women, not men, preside at funerals. It is a ritual of female empowerment, and they use it to inspire revenge for those killed. The women wear all black and carry large knives. Believe me, they don't take crap from anyone." With this imagery, Diamandi takes her artistic venture full circle. Back in 1982, on the **LITANIES OF SATAN** LP, Diamonds included a segment called "Wild Women With Steak Knives."

It is crucial to realize that Diamandi's venture is much more than just artistic. Unlike the plethora of pretentious, trend-conscious P.C. bands around these days, Diamonds practices what she preaches — and she started doing it long before it became trendy. As an active member of ACT UP, she was arrested in the famed St. Patrick's mass disruption,

she works with AIDS patients who have otherwise been abandoned by family and friends, and she's a tireless crusader for the procurement of proper research and legislation behind the scenes. This is the real McCoy — not some phony panderer at the "death-as-festival" crowd. In fact, she bristles at the very mention of that kind of gratuitous indulgence. "Death isn't entertainment. It's something to resist, not revel in as the Goths do. If Gothic means **THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER**, the MASQUE, 19th century symbolism — that's cool. If it means a bunch of bored kids dressed in black worshipping death, I'm not interested."

Diamandi vows the fight will continue for as long as the plague does. She is presently working on yet another installment of the **PLAQUE MASS**. It will take still another angle on the crisis. "There will be a totally different energy with



The wild woman with a knife turns urban guerrilla in the war against AIDS.

this new recording," says Diamanda. "It will be a lot more introspective — just my voice and a gorgeous Steinway grand piano. I locked myself away for this one — like a monk. This will be a lot more quiet and gentle than the extreme energy I put into the previous recordings."

Don't be fooled for a second, however; Ms. Galas has no intention of mellowing out and going in some more mainstream and palatable direction.

"People have been asking me when am I gonna do something else, when am I gonna give up this 'Red Death' thing. Well, the funeral isn't over yet, is it? I said I'd work from

'84 till the end of the epidemic, so don't hold your breath waiting for 'love songs, nothing but love songs.' Anything else I do will just have to take a back seat and transpire along side."



The Devil has designed my death  
and he is waiting to be sure  
that plenty of his black sheep die  
before he finds a cure.

— Diamanda Galas  
"Let My People Go"

YOU MUST BE CERTAIN OF THE DEVIL



Elan Roberts

"Were you a witness?" — Diamanda performs the ultimate PLAGUE MASS.



# COIL



Interview by  
Maria Blount  
Photos by  
L. Watson



## Out Of Light – Cometh Darkness

**W**ith pounding bass rhythms and spiraling dinge melodicities, the music of Coil sucks you into its hypnotic electronic embrace. Often referred to as dance-trance or death disco, the sound the band has cultivated over the years could very well be used as the soundtrack for any cinematic nightmare. Clive Barker, the horror impresario himself, commissioned Coil to write the theme music for his monstrous masterpiece, "Hellraiser," but found the selections "too disturbing, even depraved."

The hypnotic nature of the music has much more to it than just a surface dance quality. There is a much deeper, more encompassing purpose — that of altering consciousness and affecting the perception of reality. This alone can be considered the true essence of why Coil creates music.

"We call it 'deep listening,'" explains the band's co-founder Peter Christopherson. "The music is meant to affect the head, heart and feet simultaneously. It plays to your desire for pleasure. Originally, music and tribal rhythms were used for ritual purposes — for the accumulation of sexual and intellectual energy. We'd like our music to affect the listener in that way — as a drug would."

This would seem to be a logical desire considering the fact that much of the music was created with the aid of "chemical enhancers." When Peter first formed the legendary industrial band Throbbing Gristle back in the late '70s with Genesis P-Orridge (now of Psychic TV), their experimentation with hallucinogens and psychadelics ran parallel to their experimentation with electronics and acoustics. To this day, these so-called enhancers play a pivotal role in how Peter

and the other members of Coil approach their music. The band's other co-founder, John Balance, insists that the use of such drugs is limited to creative inquiry only, and not the mindless over-indulgence associated with many musical artists. "We only use these substances — like Ecstasy and Ketamine — to help us explore alternative means for producing the kind of music we want to. Some of our new stuff is so complex that you need these aids to fully appreciate all the subtle nuances. Military and intelligence agencies have used these drugs for years to increase cognitive and perceptive capacity. They call them neurotoxins or 'smart' drugs. Today, they're big in the cyberpunk and Virtual Reality scenes. Scientists use them to enhance mental capability, so there's nothing wrong with it if it's used in a positive, creative sense."

Coil's latest LP, *LOVE'S SECRET DOMAIN*, attests to this partaking in chemically enhanced creativity. The initials spell out LSD, and the title of the single off the album is "Wandowpane," an infamous form of the aforementioned synthetic derivative. You can discover a lot about the band and their interests just by reading the song titles and lyrics — and just by studying the album cover itself. As you might have imagined, it's dotted with tiny Ecstasy capsules. Just as telling, however, is the depiction of these capsules being ejected from a disembodied penis. To Coil, sensuality is the be all and end all of their creativity. They want to experience everything the five senses have to offer — and then some. The penis represents male sexuality, the cornerstone of their sensual expression. Coil makes no secret of their homosexuality and how they've integrated it into their music.

"If anything," says John, "we haven't incorporated enough sex into our music. We see Coil as a sensual entity, very much a vehicle to indulge in all things carnal. My favorite project thus far was doing the video for the song 'Love's Secret Domain.' We shot it in Thailand, and much of it was on location at a gogo boy bar in Bangkok called the Super-A Boy Bar. One scene had me performing on stage surrounded by twenty dancing boys. You'll never see that one on MTV, people. That's what I want us to be all about — raw sensuality."

While LOVE'S SECRET DOMAIN is indeed darkly sensuous — with songs like "Where Ewain The Darkness," "Tibet's Arch," and "Dark River" — the album is overall more upbeat than the band's previous LPs, SCATOLOGY (84) and HORSE ROTATOR FOR (85).

"When we were recording those albums, it was the beginning of the AIDS epidemic," explains Peter. "A lot of our friends were beginning to die, and we just didn't feel it was appropriate to do anything too upbeat. We were in mourning, and actually still in shock from it all. So obviously, a lot of the songs dealt with coming to terms with death and dying. It was a catharsis for all of us. [The band recorded an AIDS benefit single — a remake of Soft Cell's "Tainted Love," how apropos.] Now that a few years have passed, we've learned to deal with the crisis. I see no contradiction in being able to enjoy yourself, even in the midst of a catastrophe. Constant mourning solves nothing; positive energy does. The spirit is within us to connect any situation."

Which brings us to the final element appearing on Coil's LSD album cover — the sign of the pentagram, the phrase "out of light cometh darkness," and the All Seeing Eye of Aleister Crowley's magickal society — the OTO. Coil has long been associated with bands such as Current 93 and Death In June, who have been linked to satanic Crowleyan groups and the more extreme elements of Tibetan Buddhism. One of Aleister Crowley's assertions — known as the Thleonic Creed



John and Peter explore "The Darkness."

from his Book Of The Law — states that history is divided into three eras. The first was the era of Isis, the Egyptian nature goddess. Society during this time was matriarchal — feminine in character. The second epoch was that of Osiris, god of the underworld and brother/husband to Isis. This era spawned the three great religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, under which society became patriarchal — male dominated. Now we have entered the era of Horus, the Egyptian child-god of light, offspring of Isis and Osiris. During this time, the true self of man would dominate. God would be within us rather than a separate external entity. The only allegiance would be to ourselves. Thus we see that Coil's belief in inner spiritual power follows closely with what Crowley described as the third epoch of history. "Be strong, O man," he said. "Be positive, be lustful and enjoy the things of the senses. Fear not any god shall deny them of this."

Peter is quick to point out, however, that the band rejects religious dogma of any kind, be it pagan, satanic or christian. "The problem we have with Crowley is the same problem we have with any organized religion — the dogma, the set of rules you have to live by. It doesn't mean we have to reject everything Crowley said and did. He basically said to follow your own nose, do what feels right to you. The power is within each of us. He was also an advocate for gay rights in a very hostile climate for such activity — Victorian England. As far as the pentagram goes, we can't use it as a satanic symbol, but as a symbol of sexual power honoring such gods as Mars and Mercury, who the OTO saw as sources of their power. We're just interested in the symbolism."

This symbolic indulgence is an integral part of Coil's music — a sound that is both thought-provoking and thought-numbing. Coil will be releasing an EP entitled SNOW very shortly. It's a collaboration with Jack Dangerous of Meat Beat Manifesto that promises to be another excursion into the depths of our libidos.

"We like working with people who have the same sensibilities we do," adds Peter. "Jack's also into things deeper and darker than the so-called 'average' person."

After all, deep listening demands deep music. To obtain a T-shirt with the Crowley "Thleonic Creed" symbol, send a sausue to H.T. Forbes, Box 2383, New York, N.Y. 10009 (for a catalog).



# ICARUS AND ANGELS

A Photographic Inquiry  
by Anne A. McDonald

Text by  
Paul Hart



**Al**chemy & Alchemy, Icarus & Angels was the title of a recent exhibition at Soho Photo Gallery in New York by photographer Anne Arden McDonald. The title encapsulates her truly original vision of personal fantasies — frozen moments in time where she can live out the age-old fascinations man has had with such concepts as magic, flight and divinity. Through her unique photographic self-portraits, she

can interact with these timeless mysteries.

"For once I want to know what bones know — what we can only know after we have died," Anne states in her description of the exhibit. "I have many fantasies that I cannot achieve in life as I have known it — that I may be able to achieve after death, including being able to breathe under water and fly. In my photographs, I watch myself achieving



these goals. My photographs are about fantasies. Even the commonplace everydailiness and lack of mystery in the mere moment has never made me cease to search and stretch and dream. I look into my hand and imagine that the beginnings of wet feathers or long needles could grow from my palm. And just because it didn't happen yesterday, doesn't

mean that right now can't be different. I mythologize and narrate the places and objects around me — and so I survive via imagination in a world that has paved over some of its magic." Anne's work has gotten national acclaim, and has probably done so because it allows the viewer to experience her sense of obtaining the unobtainable. To be continued.



PROPAGANDA VIDEO MAGAZINE PRESENTS

# THE TRILOGY





Come and see the Black Angel of Death presiding over the darklands of the Inquisition and the Holocaust. Come and see the ritual roasts of witch burnings and Auschwitzesque cremations. Come and see the splendid cadavers who lie like lovers at the feet of vampiric death camp guards. Come and see gothic altar boys with angelic faces and demonic thoughts. Swoon with the young priest who beats himself bloody with the cat-o'-nine-tails. Rejoice in the ecstasy of the saint, her hands wounded by the stigmata, who dies at the stake in the flames of martyrdom. Embrace the sensual vulnerability of the youthful victim who joins the naked and the dead at the hands of a Nazi executioner. And plunge into the vertiginous abyss with this same devilishly handsome SS man, the executioner turned victim, chalk-white against the remnant of his black uniform in grim anticipation of his own violent demise.

These exquisite horrors, invoked by the Crucifix and the swastika, shimmer through the flickering video flame of "The Trilogy," a Cinema Propaganda production which takes the meaning of darkness to the Nth degree. It is a monstrous theatre of the vampires, of the lust for blood, of zombified Catholic clergy and drunken SS killers. These are not, however, historical or political cardboard cut-outs, but fantastic creatures of the imagination, portrayed by such Propaganda lovelies as John Kovak, Michelle Duncan, and Scott Crawford who have oftentimes graced the pages of Propaganda Magazine with their alluring presence. Beauty such as this, in the midst of so much human wreckage, evokes a macabre eroticism which is rooted in a total confusion between death and sensuality and between pleasure and pain. It is this combination of necrophilia and sadomasochism which gives rise to the mystique of vampirism, the cult of Christian martyrdom, and even the ideological savagery of Nazism. Both of these passionate, chaotic, and devastating compulsions are represented throughout the film by means of the fetishistic trappings of the Church and the SS - the Crucifix and the death's head emblem, priestly robes and finely tailored black uniforms, church steeples and barbed wire.

What is essential to "The Trilogy" is that all which takes place, from vampire neck-bites to firing squads, comes from the realm of fantasy, of burning nightmares in barren wastelands, cemeteries, and crumbling old fortresses. And in these surreal landscapes, where the enchanted demons of the mind live,



Fred Begeer

the gruesome spectacle of orgasmic ritual murder is acted out. But, let us not look too hard at the historical events which are a mere distorted reflection of this blackest of dreams, for reality is only a passing side-effect of the imaginary. Things of the greatest importance and longevity belong not to the world of "real life," but to the world of the imagination, that sublime place of shadows which is more substantial, more concrete, than any chronicle of history. Even the day-to-day of our waking lives is but a vapor by comparison to the dreamscapes of the mind.

"The Trilogy" is a 20-minute total eclipse of humanity and reason, a panorama of utter darkness infused with funereal dirges and a diabolical instrumental score by My Life With The Thrall Kill Kult. These ominous yet seductive melodies are expressions of the powerful emotions aroused by the dead body and the beautiful victim. And it is here, in this savage Garden of Torments, where deadly symbols of faith and fanaticism function as aphrodisiac, that death and violence have merged with desire, "Sweet is death, who comes like a lover."



#### VIDEO ORDERING INFORMATION

"The Trilogy" was filmed in 16mm black & white movie film. It is available in VHS only, and is recorded in stereo. Price: \$14.95. See the SANCTUARY MUSIC SALES ad on pg.41.

# SWANS

by Julian Morrison



Michael Gira (right) and  
Jarboe (opposite page)  
form the nucleus of the  
dynamic Swans.

"I think it's the best thing I've ever made," says Michael Gira, vocalist, lyricist and founder of Swans. "I don't even think of how accessible it is compared to older material, but I do hope it will expand my audience."

His tone of voice is calm and confident as he speaks about the latest Swans album, **WHITE LIGHT FROM THE MOUTH OF INFINITY**. He answers questions about the album with the relieved matter-of-factness and subdued enthusiasm of a person who has accomplished something extraordinary and wants to savor the taste of successful creative achievement. The Swans' sound underwent an incredible metamorphosis back in 1983 with the release of their previous album, **THE BURNING WORLD**. Gira considers that to be the start of a new era for Swans.

"The change came about primarily because I could no longer continue to do what I was doing at the time," he recalls. "I decided I could not take what I had done with **HOLY MONEY** or **GREED** any further without becoming a self-parody, because I had exhausted that mode. It was no longer real. You reach a point where you just start repeating yourself,

not to mention the fact that I was destroying myself physically and mentally, and the audiences were apathetic. So I just quit. Throwing myself around on stage half-naked to the pounding of the music became really old."

The new direction Swans were to take was first hinted at with the 1988 release of the **LOVE WILL TEAR US APART** Ep, which was composed of two different recordings of the Joy Division classic — one with Michael Gira singing, and the other with Jarboe handling the vocal duties. Undoubtedly, the charismatic Jarboe joining the band also had an influence on this change of style. Also included on the Ep were re-recordings of two **CHILDREN OF GOD** songs, "Our Love Lies" and "Trust Me." The songs are done in melodic acoustic mode rather than the industrial walls-of-sound style Swans had become infamous for. Visceral and emotional intensity intricately woven into complex textures of strings replaced the trademark cold and brutal noise machinations.

It is unquestionable that Swans, in their eight years of existence (beginning in 1983 with the release of **FILTH**), have always striven to produce music that was absolutely uncompromising.

Lawrence Watson

*music from  
the mouth  
of infinity*



## JARBOE

promising. They never yielded to commercial appeal, whether it concerned the music itself, the lyrics or the cover art. So it is ironic that Gira's version of "Love Will Tear Us Apart" became their first big success, considering the fact that they were just covering someone else's song.

"That angered me a lot," Jarboe tells me over coffee on another day. "It wasn't just the fact that the only song we hadn't written became so popular, but it was also that Michael's version of 'Love Will Tear Us Apart' was so incredibly accessible in beat and feel. To me, it was like, 'Is this what we have to do?'" She renounces the song for its radio-readiness, but claims she liked her own version a great deal.

Jarboe was asked to join Swans after following them around simply as a fan and later as a roadie. Her admiration for Michael remains as unswerving today as it was then. "His lyrics play me like a musical instrument; they hit a chord deep inside me. I joined as a huge fan, and I'm still a tremendous fan. Michael really knows how to use the people he works with according to the talents they possess. When he gives a song to me, I expand and develop it. As I

work with a song, I transform it a great deal by introducing a theme that wasn't there to begin with." In that way, ownership of the song becomes ambiguous; it has the stamp of both Gira and Jarboe on it. She also has the freedom to expand on the musical structures themselves. "Any time there are many, those are usually my orchestrations."

Like Gira, Jarboe has a very definite opinion about the transformation of the Swans' sound. "Both he and I see it as a very natural progression," she says. "It's only partially conscious. The lyrics, however, are just as dark as they've ever been — it's just the music that's changed. I think we're more open now, more natural. To use the perverse operatic chants we used on songs like 'Sex God Sex' would be a bit pretentious."

And so arises the inevitable metaphoric comparison of the ugly duckling developing into the beautiful swan. Without a doubt, the songs on *WHITE LIGHT* are some of the more beautiful songs Swans have ever recorded. They are strong, thick with texture and consistent in theme. Some raise the soul, others crush it, but all command its attention.

The album opens with "Better Than You," an eerie anecdote about relationships: "And I can see clearly through this veil of reality. And I can remember the feel of your skin. No, you never knew me, and you never will." The guitars swirl as the strings weave an atmosphere fit for a grand concert hall. The next song, "Power And Sacrifice," was produced by Jim Thirwell of Poetura, and is the only cut on the album that features Norman Westberg, one of the original members of Swans. Here, traits of the old Swans shine through — the guitars and percussion are dark pneumatic drills carrying Gira's bombastic proclamations: "I want power because it feels good. I feel power running through my veins." With this sense of sarcasm, Gira has often written about the dynamics of power, whether it be political, financial or emotional.

Irony has always been a constant in Gira's work, and the rule remains unbroken with such fabulously deceptive songs as "Miracle Of Love," "Love Will Save You" and "Song For The Sun." At first listen, the songs seem to carry an optimism until now unheard of. Looking beneath the surface, however, an entirely different reality is revealed. They are not the songs of hope, love and light they seemed to be.

Arguably, the most powerful song on the album is "Failure," a lament done in softly spoken voices on the predicaments and disillusionments of the man narrating the song. Here, Swans set new standards in their ability to conjure imagery through lyrics that complement music to a common purpose or theme.

"Failure" is perhaps the best lyric I ever wrote," says Gira enthusiastically. "One night, I was playing this riff over and over, and the song came together from that feel. Usually, I struggle for days with lyrics, trying to get them just the way I want — whereas 'Failure' was immediately realized. It's almost as though it wrote itself."

Reaching similar heights of stark power and haunting atmospherics are the two songs sung by Jarboe — "Song For Dead Time" and "When She Breathes." She obtains a bewitching quality of sensuality that Gira cannot. "Jarboe is definitely an incredible asset," concurs Gira. Another asset to Swans is the myriad of excellent musicians Gira has assembled for the LP. One is Clinton Steele, guitarist from the now defunct Mary My Hope. "Mary My Hope opened for us a few times on the road, and I really liked Clinton's guitar work, so I approached him to play on this record," says Gira. "I'm very happy with all the musicians who helped us out. It ends up failing together half haphazardly, half by design. I have each musician's work set up for them before they enter the studio, but they put their own style into what's drawn up for them."

Besides Westberg and Steele, also helping Gira and Jarboe create **WHITE LIGHT** were Christoph Henn (guitar), Jenny Wade (bass), Anton Pier (synths), Nicky Skopelitis (guitar), Vincent Signorile (percussions), Hahn Rowe (violin) and Steve Burgh (mandolin and 12-string). The album, which was produced by Gira himself, clocks in at a whopping 70+ minutes and was released on his newly formed label, Young God Records. Jarboe muses and speculates about problems with their former labels, and what brought Young God about.

"The bureaucratic process is completely absurd," she says. "It has to be experienced to be believed." Sounds all too familiar — to which Gira adds: "This last record was mixed and remixed something like twenty-three times because of having to make sure everything went out as I wanted it to be. That put me in massive debt. That's one of the reasons I have Young God, so that I can create and deal with all those things within my own framework of capital and time limits and creative boundaries."



Jarboe and Michael relax after recording the new Swans LP, **LOVE OF LIFE**, due out shortly on Young God Records.

Also released on this label were two LPs by Swans' alter ego, **World Of Skin**. This side project allowed Gira and Jarboe to explore other avenues not appropriate for Swans recordings.

Both Jarboe and Gira are currently recording brand new material. Jarboe's solo project, **13 MASKS**, will be out very shortly. "I'm very happy with it," she says, "because this time no one had their thumb on me. I wasn't pinned down in any specific limits. It's very eclectic, very weird, perverse — even deranged. There are fourteen vignettes — one piece is not a mask, and the other thirteen are. I'm not about to disclose which is not a mask."

As for the new Swans album now being recorded, Gira will only say, "It'll be very much in the style of **WHITE LIGHT**. It was an adventure in misery trying to get it all together! As of now, we can't project a release date."

In the meantime, **WHITE LIGHT** is in the stores, and the band is planning a national tour for sometime this spring. To produce a live facsimile of the complex sound Swans achieve in the studio, Gira and Jarboe will be joined on the road by seven other musicians — many of whom were mentioned earlier. "Look for a lot of stuff to be played from the new album," informs Jarboe, "as well as some **World Of Skin** material." Put on your shades, the **WHITE LIGHT FROM THE MOUTH OF INFINITY** is destined to flood the land with its blinding rays.



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# reaching NIRVANA



photo: Charles Peterson

"My goal in life right now is to be a street musician," says Nirvana's unproclaimed leader, Kurt Cobain, to an astonished music journalist. "I just wanna travel to different cities and play music on sidewalks and in subways."

"Excuse me, am I hearing right? You are Kurt, aren't you? From the fabulously popular band-of-the-moment, Nirvana?" An irresistible curiosity compels me to delve deeper into the reluctant superstar's surprising sentiment. His seemingly irrational statement begins to shape itself into a reasonable explanation of what this very hot property, Nirvana, is all about.

"The whole commercial side of Nirvana is starting to digest me," adds Kurt. "I feel like we're part of some grandiose marketing machine, some kind of commercial gimmick. If I could get out of this thing — leave the band — I would. But I'm under contract."

Simply unbelievable. But what a contract it is. Nirvana's latest album **NEVERMIND** has scorched its way into Billboard's TOP 10 albums. The furor surrounding this band has reached a fever pitch. The album's first single/video "Smells Like Teen Spirit" has achieved the pinnacle of commercial acceptance — heavy rotation on MTV. To the bewilderment of many in the music biz, however, none of this seems to be

very important to Kurt and his bandmates, Chris Novoselic (bass) and Dave Grohl (drums). They are apparently much more comfortable with the artistic alternative scene of their past than they are with the mega-metal-stardom pantheon of such goths as Guns N' Roses and Metallica.

"I'm not proud of the fact that we have tons of MTV junkies and Guns N' Roses fangirls at our shows now," laments Kurt. "These are the kinds of people who are screaming out 'Do Teen Spirit!' during 'Polly.' [*'Polly'* being a quiet, introspective acoustic piece about a rape victim.] How are these pinheads going to appreciate the subtleties of something like 'Territorial Pissings,' when they're doing it themselves out in the hallways. It's about a violent female revolution based on Valerie Solanas's book, **THE SCUM MANIFESTO**. How are these typical, macho American males gonna appreciate that?"

These are also the types whom Kurt is referring to in "Teen Spirit" — the grungy pop anthem chiding the complacency of the current Nintendo generation, whose only major concern seem to be how to impress the opposite sex and when the next Gameboy cartridge will be available. The message behind "Teen Spirit" is that there is no teen spirit. The LP's title, **NEVERMIND**, is meant to underscore this rampant apathy. Even the album's cover (a baby under water being

lured by a dollar as bart attached to a fish hook) illustrates how a whole generation has allowed itself to be bribed by consumerism run amuck. Taking all these elements together, it's easy to empathize with Kurt's disenchantment regarding the marketing end of the band's success — the gimmicks and games that have to be played.

"We're not comfortable with the whole packaging of so-called 'rock n' roll stardom,'" says Kurt. "We don't like playing really large venues. In fact, we've turned down a ton of offers to support various 'monsters of metal.' Let's just say I don't even want to be associated with those kinds of bands. It's all clichés and calculated corporate crap. The only reason we signed to a major label (Geffen's DGC) is because they have better distribution and it gave us more money to spend on proper production. It bothered us that people couldn't find our records in stores. We've also gotten much better distribution in Europe, where we have a pretty big following. Also, Geffen has never tried to change us — musically or visually. I'm still wearing the same old rage I did three years ago."

Nirvana sprang out of the same Seattle garage-music nursery (Sub Pop) that spawned the likes of Soundgarden and Mudhoney. Their 1989 debut album, *BLEACH*, caused quite a stir in the scum-rock underground. Though Kurt describes the band's more recent music as "less angry and aggressive" than the *BLEACH* material, there is a definite similarity of style linking the two.

As the dominant songwriter in the band (in addition to being the vocalist and guitarist), Kurt has the uncanny ability to mix melodic pop sensibility with chaotic punk rawness. In Kurt's words: "It's the Knack and Bay City Rollers being molested by Black Flag and Black Sabbath."

With such a polyglot of influences, it's a real challenge trying to predict where Nirvana might go with their next album, especially since all eyes in the music-buying world

will be watching intently.

"We won't really know what will happen until we actually start recording," says Kurt. "Right now, we're too busy touring. We've written some material, but until we actually arrange it, it's difficult to know. We can go off in any direction — it depends on how we feel. We just might come out with a *Bathhouse Surfers* or *Sonic Youth* record — or maybe something folk — who knows?" Both the Surfers and Youth happen to be among Kurt's favorite bands. His personal tastes remain very alternative, but where does he see Nirvana's place in the rock universe, considering their now-found broad acceptance.

"Categories are pretty useless," says Kurt, "but being successful doesn't mean you can't retain alternative sensibilities, take R.E.M. for example. But let's face it, we enjoy eating meat too much, so maybe that completely disqualifies us from being labeled alternative. What self-respecting indie band these days would down as many chili dogs as we do?"

Kurt and company can gorge themselves on all the animal protein they want, but it doesn't change the fact that they yearn for those simpler days in the Seattle underground, when they could concentrate on their craft without all the hoopla and unnecessary distractions.

"Even though we achieved whatever there was to achieve on the underground level," explains Kurt, "it's really all we ever wanted. Don't get me wrong, I'm not some ungrateful malcontent; it's nice to have notoriety. But it would be refreshing someday to get back into the independent scene and just become anonymous again. You know, get away from it all and just do what we want."

Wouldn't it be really novel if that included scrumming an old, broken-down acoustic guitar in some grimy, downtown subway station.

Also available on the Sub Pop label are Nirvana's *BLEW* EP and "Love Buzz"/"Big Cheese" maxi-single.



Nirvana's Kurt Cobain rips the roof off the Warfield in San Francisco.

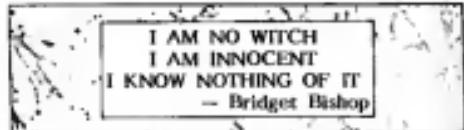
# S A L E M

## R E V I S I T E D



By Tara Bai  
& Liza Seybold

A Puritan mob hunts down accused witches in 17th century New England.



**S**he says the inscription on a stone wall overlooking Charter Street Cemetery in the village centre of Salem, Massachusetts. This etching is but one among seventeen carved into a memorial wall commemorating those who were accused, tried and executed for the crime of consorting with the Devil during the infamous Salem Witch Trials of 1692.

This coming June 10th, this memorial will be unveiled and dedicated in a ceremony honoring the 300th anniversary of the trials. It will be presided over by Arthur Miller, the renowned playwright whose play **THE CRUCIBLE** depicts the events of that dark year and uses their example as a warning against any kind of dogmatic persecution hysteria, be it religious or political. June 10th is particularly significant because it was on that date in 1692 that the first accused witch was executed. Her name was Bridget Bishop, and it is her plea for justice and mercy that are chiseled into the granite at the head of the monument. Beneath her inscribed protestations are those of the eighteen others who followed her to the hangman's noose on Gallows Hill.

[Unlike in Europe, where witches were considered heretics and summarily burned at the stake, those convicted of witchcraft in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts were considered felons and thus were sentenced to death by hanging, as would

be a murderer.]

The memorial monument is surrounded by Black Locust trees — the kind that were used to hang the accused victims from. In addition to this dedication ceremony, the city of Salem and the state of Massachusetts will be co-sponsoring commemorative events all year long, including a nationally televised, fully costumed re-enactment of the trials, and a Haunted Happenings week next Halloween.

All this may seem like an extraordinary fuss over a mere nineteen executions, especially when you consider all the much larger genocides and persecutions that have transpired since then. The Salem Witch Hunt, however, has long been considered the classic model of how mass hysteria can feed off itself and spread with pandemic fervor. The "witch hunt" has thus become the metaphor for describing all kinds of religious, ethnic and political persecutions. The story of Salem is so fascinating because it so vividly demonstrates how the deadly combination of fear and ignorance can whip up a firestorm of hysteria. To imagine how the hallucinations and accusations of two young girls can ultimately lead to so many deaths and arrests is nothing short of demonic itself.

The whole tragic story began innocently enough. The winter of 1691-92 was a particularly harsh one. The townspeople of the New England colonies were largely confined to the indoors for the better part of January and February. Fifteen miles north of Boston, in the village of Salem, two young girls, Elizabeth Parry, 8, and Abigail Williams, 11, found that the best way to alleviate their prepubescent restlessness and boredom was to have Elizabeth's father's Caribbean slave, Tituba, come in and tell them stories of black magic and the occult back on her native island of Barbados. Among other

things, she taught the girls how to foretell the future by using an inverted glass over an egg as a primitive crystal ball. Elizabeth and Abigail thus discovered an absolutely engrossing way to while away the long hours of the dreary New England winter days. What the girls started to envisage, however, was not the future, but horrible images of demons, coffins and other frightful specters. These visions became so intense that the girls became violently ill with seizures and convulsions. They ran into the village streets spouting psychotic babble and blasphemous epithets. Elizabeth's father, the village minister Samuel Parris, immediately had the girls confined to the house to have them examined by several doctors. When no physical ailment could be diagnosed, a couple of the doctors suggested the unthinkable — Satanic influence, "bewitchment."

To the people of Puritan New England, the affliction of Satanic possession was as real as any physical disease; its potential for contraction as frightening as any epidemic. Protestant Puritanism was based in strict, unyielding Calvinism, and its most influential proponent in the New World was William Perkins, whose treatise, *THE DAMNED ART OF WITCHCRAFT*, was accepted as the gospel truth along with the holiest of books, the Bible. Perkins described witchcraft as the "Church Of Hell," an organized conspiracy against God, the church and the state. And in Puritan New England, the church and the state were one. Perkins used a passage in the Bible from Exodus XX which states, "Thou shall not suffer a witch to live," as proof that God demands the penalty of death for those found guilty of practicing witchcraft.

With this divine retribution as a backdrop, is it any wonder how these girls induced their own affliction. Being the daughter and niece of a strict Puritan minister, Elizabeth and Abigail were afflicted only with a conflict of conscience, good vs. evil, guilt vs. desire, God vs. Satan. This was also the mechanism that drove the rumor mill and spread the



news of this event like wildfire throughout Salem and its neighboring communities. A reverend in the nearby town of Beverly proclaimed to his parishioners, "I fear some young persons, through a vein of curiosity to know their future conditions, have tampered with the Devil's tools so far that hereby one door was opened for Satan to pass."

In a desperate attempt to quell the hysteria, Minister Parris put his daughter and niece through a strict regimen of fasting and prayer — the Puritan form of exorcism. It did nothing to stem their malady. Suddenly, several other girls in the village were stricken with the same distressing symptoms. Nothing the doctors and reverends could do had any effect. It seemed as though their God had failed them, which prompted one Mary Sibley, aunt of one of the afflicted girls, to seek an answer elsewhere. She employed the help of another Carib Indian slave, John Indian, to use his extensive knowledge of the occult to formulate a remedy. What he came up with, however, was a strategy to induce the girls to reveal their tormenting demons and/or witches, whom up until then the girls had been unable to identify. For then he produced a recipe for a "witch cake" — an unsavory concoction that mixed rye and corn meal with the urine of the afflicted girls. This nasty treat was fed to the Parris' dog, whom John believed to be a "familiar," a messenger assigned to a witch by the Devil. When Minister Parris accidentally discovered what had been done, he angrily accused Sibley of "going to the Devil for help from the Devil." Accusations aside, as soon as this witch cake spell was revealed to the girls, they started spewing the names of their afflictors — as if some uncon-



Hooded executioners bury the bodies of convicted witches in a plot of unconsecrated earth.

sorous release of guilt had taken place. "They afflict us. They come in the night to torment us. They are witches." With these words, the two girls exposed their one-time friend Tituba, and named Sarah Good (who may have been of unsound mind) and Sarah Osbourne (an elderly woman who was rumored to have once been an adulteress) as accomplices.

Two days later, the three women were arrested for witchcraft and brought before local magistrates Jonathan Corwin and John Hathorne, who "examined" and interrogated the women in an abusive and bullying manner. John Hathorne's grandson, the famed author Nathaniel, would later add a "w" to the name [Hathorne] to distance the family from those abominable proceedings. He would also write a book called **THE HOUSE OF SEVEN GABLES**, which concerned itself with the events of 1692. That house still stands today in Salem and attracts the curious the world over, along with the Witch Museum, the Witch Dungeon, and the Witch House — the home of Magistrate Corwin, where many of the accused were examined.

Sarah Good and Sarah Osborne vehemently denied the allegations and maintained absolute innocence. Tituba, on the other hand, was singled out for particularly harsh treatment — probably because of her slave status — and was beaten and threatened into making a full confession. Not only did she implicate herself, but she also confessed to consorting with the two Barnards. As if this weren't enough, she admitted to actively consorting with Satan himself, and that he would appear to her as "large hog or a great hound with eyes of fire." He presented her with a large book in which she made a pentacle mark as a sign of her loyalty. She claimed there were eight other marks in the book including those made by Good and Osborne. The magistrates had struck gold. All three women were thrown in prison. Osborne, being the frail, elderly woman she was, would die there due to the mistreatment and neglect she suffered in order to get her confession. Good would go to the gallows and hang later that year. Tituba would be pardoned for her confessions and the wealth of information she supplied. Because of her revelations about Satan and his book, the judges knew there were more witches yet to be discovered who were involved.



Accused witch Elizabeth Selwyn looks to Satan for assistance.

In this "treacherous conspiracy against the good people of Salem," this set off an avalanche of accusations. With their adolescent fantasies validated by the authorities, the afflicted girls divulged names of conspiring witches left and right. No one was above suspicion — young and old, male and female, rich and poor, respected and despised. The "affliction of bewitchment" spread to many of the older townspeople as well.

They claimed to experience strange apparitions and visitations from those they believed to be witches. Salem and its environs were dragged into the nightmare of **MALLEUS MALIFICARUM** — the witch hunters' handbook of 15th century Europe. Because these supernatural apparitions were considered cold, hard reality, they were admissible in a court of law as "spectral evidence" — evidence as real and reliable as a smoking gun. When the smoke finally did clear, however, nineteen people were hanged on Gallows Hill (the first being Bridget Bishop), four died in prison from mistreatment, one was crushed by heavy stones, and nearly 300 were arrested. The proceedings were finally halted only when the accusations of the afflicted girls became so outrageous as to include



Selwyn and her fellow coven members offer a sacrifice to Lucifer as their part of the pact.

the president of Harvard and the wife of the Massachusetts governor himself. He had the court dissolved and public opinion quickly turned against the witch hunters. Everyone started to blame each other for what had occurred.

Though the vast majority of the witch hysteria was unfounded, there were indeed active covens throughout New England. At that time, most were merely groups of herbal healers similar to many of the pagan-based, new age "white" witch covens we see today — most notably in Salem itself, where Laurne Cabot (Salem's "official" witch) and her group run the Crow Haven Corner new age shop. These groups were and are basically benign, holistic nature worshippers. However, there were clandestine groups in the 1600s who outright rebelled against the harsh practices of the Puritan church, and deliberately sided with its enemy — the fallen one, Satan. These "black" witch covens signed pacts with the Devil and performed ritualistic ceremonies to pay homage to him. Their Sabbath or holy days were opportunities to mock the church. There are several remaining descendant groups in New England today. They denounce the likes of Laurne Cabot as "media hungry sellouts, not loyal to the true tenets of witchcraft."

There was an absolutely chilling English film made in 1981 about these very same 17th century cults of Devil-worshipping New England witches and their Puritan persecutors. In this film, *CITY OF THE DEAD*, accused witch Elizabeth Selwyn is hunted down by a mob of bible-toting villagers. As she is tied to the stake to be burned (which for New England is historically inaccurate, but for film is dramatically more powerful), her coven of cohorts plead to Lucifer for his demonic intervention. As the flames are set, she announces her pact with "Old Lucifer" and places a curse on the village. The skies darken, a bush falls over the crowd, and the flames mysteriously die. Elizabeth Selwyn and her coven are saved and granted eternal life. To fulfill their end of the pact, the witches must offer members of the village and their

descendants as blood sacrifices to Satan for eternity. These human sacrifices must be made twice a year — on the witches Sabbath (Candlemass Eve) and on the date Elizabeth Selwyn was to be put to the stake in 1692, which was March 3rd. If for some reason the witches cannot fulfill this end of the bargain, Lucifer would reclaim them, and they would die as they would have 300 years ago.

In the meantime, however, the witches hold dominion over this once church-going Massachusetts community. A permanent darkness hangs over it like a thick veil. The sole remaining defender of the cross, an elderly minister, sadly laments, "For 300 years the Devil has hollowed over this town. The people in it are his. Here, evil has triumphed over good." This is truly the **CITY OF THE DEAD**.

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As members of the Raven Rising "black" witch coven, Mortiche & David observe Candlemass Eve.

# BEGOTTEN

Paul Haggis



A grotesque image, "God Killing Himself," opens the film, BEGOTTEN.

**H**ave you ever struggled to awaken yourself from a bad dream? Your body writhes with muscular convulsions, your lungs gasp for air as you try to yell out. You feel completely helpless and impotent to extricate yourself from the horrific setting your subconscious mind has trapped you into. There exists a film, which some have described as a cinematic Rorschach test, that conjures all the irrational angst and primal terror of the human nightmare. Maybe the film strikes this resonant chord in the recesses of our subconsciousness because it depicts not our nightmares, but our primal fears which stem from the human condition — our beliefs, our myths, our morality, our common race consciousness and origins. The title of the film itself, BEGOTTEN, describes this commonality.

"Beneath the erasable images of banal, everyday life," says the film's creator, E. Elias Merhige, "there is only the tribal, the indebte and the apolitical. These images remain in us all from an ancient common past. These images are begotten. Existence is cyclic. Birth begets life, life begets death, death begets rebirth." Thus the title of the film begets its theme.

Set in a barren, inhospitable world — which can be taken as either prehistoric or post-apocalyptic (consequently, there is no difference), a gaunt, shrouded God-figure is depicted sacrificing himself by dismemberment. Though the tableau is grotesque and bloody, the images are filtered through a surreal haze. Director Elias Merhige created a dream-like cine-

matic effect by shooting the scenes on B&W reversal film and then rephotographing it frame by agitating frame onto B&W negative film using various density filters. The result is a flickering, high-grain, high-contrast image which appears to have actually been shot thousands of years ago.

"I wanted the film to look as though it was 2000 years old, in total decay with time," says Elias. "After all, the search for the divine in a dead world is as old as time. And the process to create that effect took nearly as long." Elias had to build a special optical bench, and the frame-by-frame treatment of the film took ten hours of lab work for every minute of the film's running time! This truly original technique gives the film the look of something somewhere between Dutch impressionist art of the late 19th century and German expressionist cinema of the 1920s.

With this eerie cinematic distortion of the image dominating the atmosphere of BEGOTTEN, the plot (cycle of humanity) proceeds forward. Having mutilated his own body, the figure described as "God Killing Himself" gives birth to a hauntingly draped embodiment of Mother Earth. The biblical reference to Eve's creation from Adam's rib is strongly evoked. In fact, the whole concept of BEGOTTEN can be viewed from the biblical perspective of creation, matrinity and crucifixion.

"BEGOTTEN is the end of a cycle, the end of humanity," explains Elias. "It is Christ brought down from the cross for the final time. It is God stolen from Heaven to be torn to

pieces in front of our eyes. From the pieces of God left behind, there is only the earth, Mother Earth."

This Mother of all things proceeds to dance as a ritualistic celebration of life. She inseminates herself with the remains of the father God and ultimately begets a child — "Son of Earth/Flesh of Bone." He is born full-grown in the same spastic, convulsive state his father died in, and is totally dependent on Mother Earth. They begin a harrowing trek across the hostile wasteland. The surreal landscape is dotted with twisted, dead trees and skulls skewered to wooden stakes. There is no dialogue in the film, only the fervent, incessant pounding of the sounds of the world — insects, birds, heartbeats and the gush of man's lifeblood. The combination of these unnerving sights and sounds are maddening. There is no escape from the nightmare. The mother and child encounter and interact with various ragtag, nomadic tribes during the course of the film. Haunting images of the sun and moon rising and setting into darkness symbolize the inner light that illuminates the delicate, dark tapestry that separates life and death. It is the lives of the mother and child that hang by a precariously thin thread as their encounters with these tribes become increasingly brutal and ribaldistic. The scene unfolds like some macabre ballet straight out of the imaginations of Bosch and Goya. BEGOTTEN was originally conceived to be produced as a performance art project by an artist group called Theater Of Material, of which Elias was a founding member. While rehearsing the piece, the members of the group came to the realization that BEGOTTEN had to be preserved for posterity, for the eons to follow. The only way to do that was on film. Because Elias, 27, was a painter and performance artist, not a trained filmmaker, he approached the making of BEGOTTEN with an

artist's perspective.

"Most movies are all formula these days," says Elias. "There's no inquiry, no anthropological excavation into the unknown. In fact, fine arts had far more of an influence on this project than film. The horrific beauty you find in Hieronymus Bosch or Munch or Goya got to me more than anything."

So it is now ironic that filmmaking giants such as Werner Herzog, Susan Sontag, etc., have been flocking to praise this monstrous masterpiece.

The symbolic history of man unfolds as the film concludes. The Mother Earth and child are mercilessly ravaged in a psycho-sexual frenzy of murder and rape. The unspeakable horror is thinly veiled in intense, grainy, black and white images. How many times have we seen another instant and courage crushed by overwhelming force. The scene induced disturbing flashbacks to those old images of seal hunters clubbing mothers and pups to death in the frozen tundra of northern Canada. But, regardless of the brutality and cruelty in nature, time marches on, never ceasing to mourn tragedy. Death begets rebirth. And in BEGOTTEN, the remains of mother and child fertilize the barren earth and nurture the growth of young seedlings into sprouts. Through the magic of time-lapse photography, we watch as the plants grow large and healthy. Hope springs eternal; the nightmare has ended.

As you can imagine, BEGOTTEN is not for the casual movie goer; it was never intended to be. Its intent is to jar a response, and like the Rorschach, the response it elicits will be different in each person. For everyone, however, BEGOTTEN will not be forgotten.

END.



The convulsive "Son Of Earth" is born from a rag-cloaked "Mother Earth."



A nomadic tribe traverses the hostile landscape of a barren Earth.



Mother and child lie ravaged from a brutal encounter with the tribe.

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# FRONT LINE ASSEMBLY LEGENDARY PINK DOTS

TWO SHIPS  
IN THE  
NIGHT

By  
René A.



BILL & RHY'S ON THE FRONT LINE WITH THE NEW TACTICAL NEURAL IMPLANT LP.

There certainly has been no shortage of underground sounds making the rounds these days. The deluge of touring alternative acts continues even as we go to press. From Meat Beat Manifesto to Fugazi to Nirvana, the club circuit has been humming with activity. Many of these bands found themselves vying for audiences in the same cities at the same times. So was the case with Front Line Assembly and the Legendary Pink Dots in Chicago. As it turns out, their joint together in the Windy City wasn't all they had in common.

Though their music couldn't be more dissimilar — Front Line's being rhythmic electronic pounding and the Dots' being mystical psychedelia — their personal and professional paths have crossed enough times to weave an intricate (and interesting) pattern.

#### FRONT & CENTER: FRONT LINE ASSEMBLY

At the front and at the center of the electronic amalgam is BILL Leeb (aka William Schroeder). At his side are the young and able Rhys Fulber and Chris Peterson. Bill met Rhys in a trendy shop in their hometown of Vancouver, British Columbia, and when original member Michael Balich left for greener pastures in Chicago with the Revolving Cocktails, Bill enlisted the boy's services.

You have to understand something about Mr. Leeb — he sometimes wears an attitude, and he'll run roughshod over you if he smells blood. Borrowing from the old adage, "the best defense is a good offense," I set the appropriate tone for the interview.

RENE: I'm not here for some boring, conventional interview.

I want bedroom talk, I want dirt. [All Bill can do is stare at me askance through his spiky bangs. Has he actually dreamed his so easily with this pre-emptive strike? I just smirk back at him and follow up with a different tact.]

RENE: Okay, let's first get the mundane stuff out of the way. How's it been working with Wax Trax?

BILL: Wax Trax is our domestic label. Third Mind is our parent label out of Britain. They're a good label. We've got no complaints.

The accent is lovely. Is it real? [A "fuck you" expression begins to appear on Bill's face.]

BILL: I'm Australian by birth.

Your newest album, CAUSTIC GRIP — or CAUSTIC CRYPT as we call it — is obviously different than past efforts. Personally, I think the ideas are a good deal clearer.

BILL: It's hardly new by now, but you're right — this album is much more direct than past efforts. We have better equipment now, so it's easier to translate ideas into reality.

I know there's no avoiding the comparisons to Skinny Puppy, but you guys are obviously doing and saying something entirely different. How would you describe your philosophy or the message behind your musical style and lyrics?

BILL: The power of the individual.

The politics of individualism?

BILL: Yeah, that's a good way of putting it. And the importance of spontaneity.

Who's in your line-up now?

BILL: Me, Rhys [points to him], and Chris Peterson. Both Rhys and Chris take care of the keyboards and percussion.

Cevin Key had some things to say about your work with Skinny Puppy. [See interview in PROPAGANDA #17.]

BILL: Oh, so you're the one who taped that interview and started all the fuss.

I have to confess, it's true. But it was never meant to be malicious.

BILL: It's about time that stuff was brought out in the open. I've known Cevin forever. He gets that way, I've known him since we were into bands like Cabaret Voltaire. Cevin was into stuff like Scandal Ballet.

Oh, by the way, Ogrin sends his regards. Give him a call when you get back to Vancouver. He'd like to hear from you. [As of early September, Bill hadn't contacted any of his homeboys. I've been told he's too preoccupied with recording way over on the other side of town.]

BILL: I love Ogrin. I really do. He's a great guy.

Back to Cevin. What was your reasons for doing the Cyberpunk project?

BILL: It was Cevin's idea for the money. That's not altogether true, but that's how it all got started. I was needing a place to stay and I ended up at Cevin's for a month. This rejuvenated the friendship and we decided to put a project together. We ended up producing an album and two singles.

You've been involved in a number of interesting side projects besides the recent endeavor with Cevin. [As far as I know there's Delirium, which is "movie music." The album includes a track with Edward Ka-Spel of the Dots on vocals. Then there's Noise Unit, coordinated through Luc Van Acker in Belgium — considered by Front Line Assembly to be "spontaneous noise" with everyone who was anyone in Belgium participating.] What else do you have going on?

BILL and RHYSB: We're about ready to get out thing called

Welt together.

Welt? We already have Hilt (Cevin & Dwayne's project) and Welt (Dwayne & company).

RHYSB: We came up with that name before Hilt came into being. We're not planning to change it.

So how's Welt going to differ from Front Line?

RHYSB: Hmm, I don't know, I'd say it's classically oriented. I can't stand it when everything's categorized, but I guess not doing so makes people uncomfortable.

[We go into a detailed discussion about future projects and various professional and personal relationships. My apologies for the secrecy, but some things are better left unsaid. I test Bill's compliance with this notion.] So, what's your favorite Drug?

BILL: Depends on how long you want to stay up.

You sleep in the nude? [Bill's out of his chair and pacing.]

BILL: It all depends...

Oh come off it. I know you sleep in the nude. [I get a half smile followed by a fretful little frown. Bill apparently doesn't kiss and tell.]

#### Edward In Wonderland: THE LEGENDARY PINK DOTS

I'm painting my toenails blood red while listening to a lengthy tapes interview with Dots founder and guru Edward Ka-Spel, whose addressing a roundtable full of eclectic young musicians and one odd writer. It's the eve of a long day and raining for the first time in many weeks, and all this seems quite befitting. Soon after, THE MARIA DIMENSION (the Pink Dots latest offering) seeps into the room where I now sit typing. It sets like shadows on the vicinal emotions of an adolescent girl, and I feel dark and dreamy and a bit confused, as a far-wandering wad will oft-times get.



Edward Ka-Spel (right) leads his Dots to the promised land.



Ka-Spel backstage in makeup.

English-born Ka-Spel (the hyphen is self-imposed) projects a marble aura of calm while somehow managing to effervesce simultaneously. Though seemingly shy and wistful, he obviously enjoys discussing the patchwork history of the band and its life, often intersecting a sense of humor dipped in deliciously coated sarcasm. Undoubtedly, this man is a Merlin, not only in so much as a lyrical pointer of lovely, mythical melodies, but in manner as well. If I were to seek out a mentor, I would only hope to find Ka-Spel willing to impart his secret knowledge. But instinct tells me that Ka-Spel has learned much of what it's come to live by by living, observing, and allowing his senses to do what the senses do best. Experience can never be taught. If this were so, we'd surely have ourselves, by now, a perfect world.

The Dots were not a premeditated, adolescent rock and roll fantasy. Instead, the initial band of errant souls convened in the mid-summer of 1980 after a Stonehenge festival — back before this ancient structure became a tourist mecca; it was for those desperately in search of mystery, cosmic clues and/or spiritual alignment. So inspired, the original members returned to London's East End, to the humble squat they shared with a local rock band, to try their hand at making their own brand of original music. Though they were subjected to near constant ridicule for their beleaguered efforts, the Dots edged on and via various cassette networks were eventually commissioned to release material on Mirrordot. Then, in 1983, with the assistance of Britain's Rough Trade, **BRIGHTER NOW**, their first honest-to-God record, was released.

With very little to their credit — a now antiquated synthesizer, a primitive drum machine and an old piano, its neumes stained with pink nail varnish (hence the name), they put together a sound which remains unique to the group. To date, the not-so-famous Legendary Pink Dots have put out over a dozen albums, changed their line-up more than this many times, and have yet to know anything beyond a constant level of tolerable subsistence.

But do they suck? Do they complain? Quite to the contrary — Edward and the gang seem unusually pleased with themselves and their accomplishments. They've been able to do what their hearts desire, long ago accepting the fact that they'd never swim in the mainstream.

I remember a moment during the course of our round-

table discussion when Edward tipped back his chair, reached forward and asked politely for a cigarette, and said something about a piece of the past. We'd been talking a bit about Skinny Puppy, exchanging mutual expressions of admiration with Edward both amused and confident as regards to their future together, and somehow mention of Front Line Assembly was made. Perhaps it was because they had played the same hall only days earlier. He laughed, looking just a bit mischievous, and told us how "way back" Devin Key and Bill Leeb had been his people-gatherers. "They worked for me," he joked, "before Skinny Puppy and long before either was entirely clear with what they were going to do."

And now, Bill is back home in Vancouver recording "way over on the other side of town," and Edward and his fellow Dots (and one lovely lady named Elisa) have returned to Europe after recording another exquisite *Tear Garden* album at Mushroom Studios. Mastered by Rave (David Ogilvie), this third project includes a more diversified line-up than the past two efforts and is, as Ed puts it, "very alternative easy listening." Like a kaleidoscope, I think watching the film run down dirty window panes. This group, though always changing, always maintains an underlying continuity. The Dots and Front Line, strange bedfellows indeed. Court jester against king, knave against knight. Two Aquarians (Key and Ka-Spel) and a Vargo (Leeb) who have gone by different roads — winding paths that now and then double-back to the same place and time in a kind of "Fancy meeting you here" manner.

In fact, Edward has a very definite view about life's many strange coincidences and the overall scheme of things.

"There is a definite order to things," he says. "Everything has a purpose, it's retaining, I don't mean in a religious sense, but it's a personal spiritual one. I see this spirituality as a guiding force, even in my music." Edward has been known to use such methods as numerology and tarot cards to come up with album and song titles. In fact, the latest album, **THE MARIA DIMENSION**, has figurines of the Mother and Child clutching its cover. The music itself is a vast expanse of Scheherazade-like magical murals. Adding richness to Edward's keyboards are Martijn de Kleer on guitars, Nils Van Hoorn-blower on saxos and woodwinds, and Phil Knight on keyboards.

It's impossible to fathom what U.S. immigration and customs was thinking last year when they denied entry to the Dots due to "lack of artistic merit." The merit is so obviously there. "But maybe the grading hand wasn't," adds Edward. And for him, that was the only reason necessary. He seems to know where it's leading him.



Wir lieben Herr Leeb.

# PIGFACE

Article  
& photos  
by RENE

Never before has such an industrial conglomerate been assembled. With members from Ministry, Killing Joke, Skinny Puppy, KMFDM, Revolting Cocks and Nine Inch Nails, this subterranean juggernaut ravaged the countryside on a recent national tour. The band was put together as a temporary outlet for the pent up creative yearnings its members were experiencing with their regular bands.

"The idea came about halfway through the last Ministry tour," says Bill Reiflin of Ministry. "That's when the concept for the band was born. I think it was Al Jourgenson's intention to create an environment where we could re-invent the same old Ministry songs. But it didn't happen that way. Instead, the things we were saying among ourselves inspired the ideas and desire for something like Pigface. And now, what we had hoped for is happening."

How did a name like Pigface come about?

**CHRIS CONNELLY:** That was the name of Martin's first band when he was ten or eleven in northern England.



Chris  
Connolly



BILL  
Reiflin

Tucker



Martin Atkins

**MARTIN ATKINS:** In fact, it was the nickname we gave to the guitarist's girlfriend. [How flattering.] The name is the only thing we have in common with that band. Actually, in attitude, Pigface is much more like early Killing Joke — which was a punk mentality. We preferred to remain anonymous as individuals. Individual fame and recognition were looked down on. Which is kind of the attitude we have in this band.

**CHRIS CONNELLY:** There's no ego clashes here. I'm sick and tired of dealing with the personality thing in bands. Individual success is not a priority within this set-up, because we all have something going on outside Pigface. If there's an ego in this band, there's only one, and that's as a unit.

Chris Connolly can afford to leave his ego at the door when it comes to playing with Pigface. His last solo effort, WHIPFLASH BOYCHILD (Wax Trax) did very nicely thank you, and his new project, tentatively titled THE WHISTLE BLOW-ER, will be released very shortly.

As for the final pillar of this musical monolith, I catch up to the elusive Ogre himself by a window of the Melody Ballroom overlooking Seattle's beautiful Puget Sound. Ogre's only shortcoming is that he thinks too much, and because of this, many see him as very shy and even introverted. How does he deal with the myriad of powerful personalities Pigface has gathered up? [Hrm, sounds like another veiled ego question.]

"I really haven't got much of an ego," admits Ogre. "These guys have been really supportive. I was really intimidated at first. I didn't even show up for the first two rehearsals. Then they had a band meeting, and I went. Their reaction was, 'Oh sure, miss rehearsals but show up when there's free beer.' Seriously though, things have worked out just great."

Anyone who has seen Pigface live can attest to that. Watch for the band to release several extended singles in the near future. In the meantime, Ministry, Skinny Puppy, Nine Inch Nails and the others will all be releasing material very shortly. You have been forewarned.

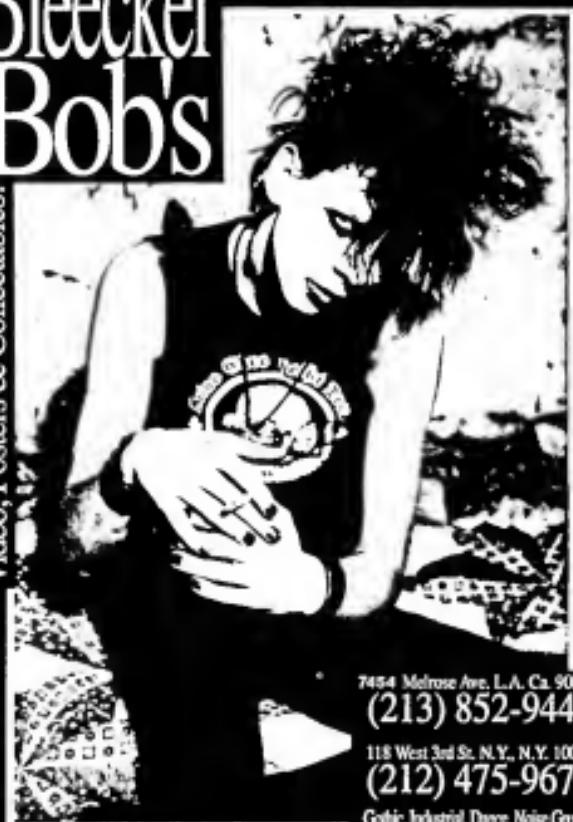


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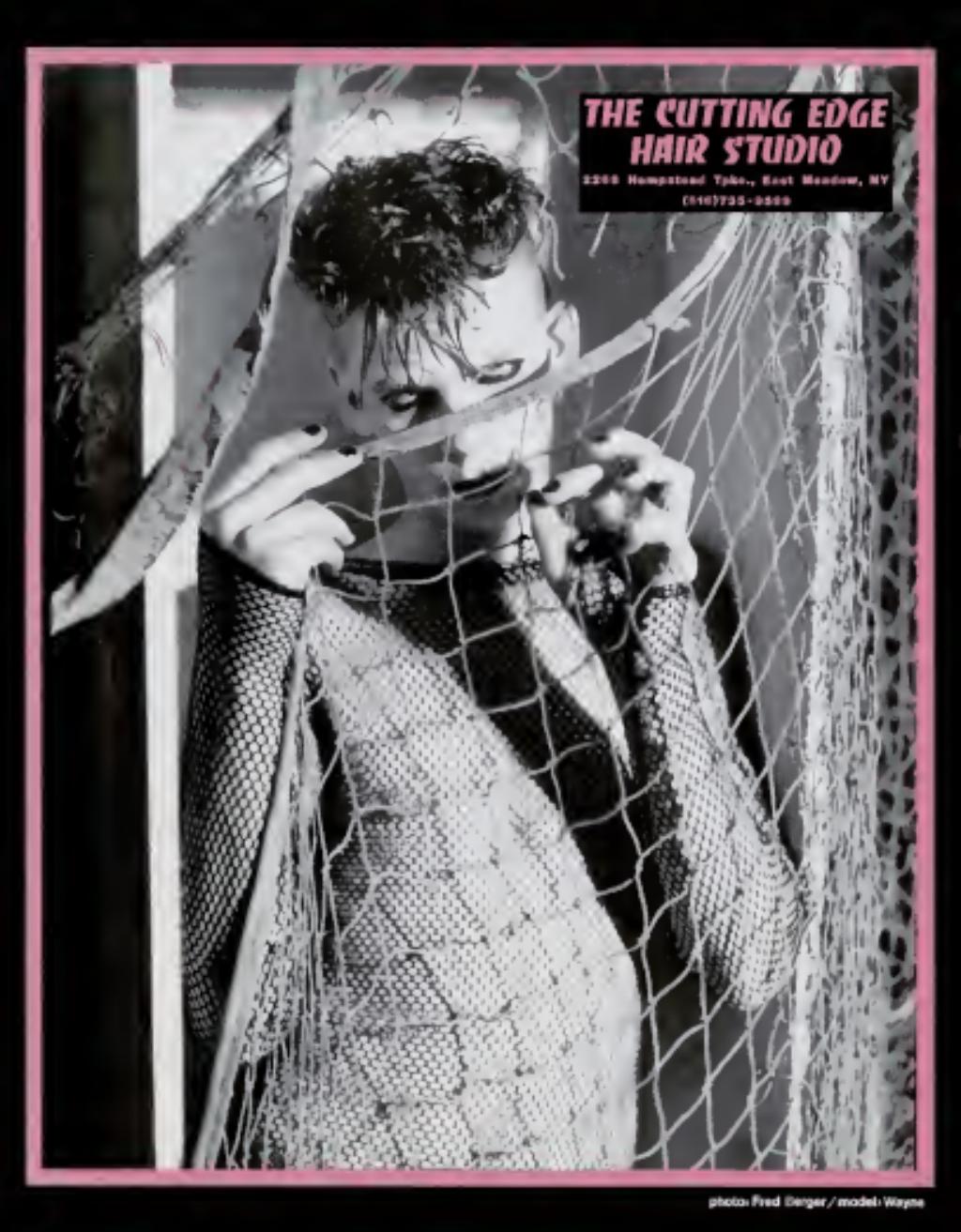
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